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AUTHOR Waksman, Steven A.
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ABSTRACT

The Preliminary Manual for the Portland Problem Behavior Checklist (PPBC) was developed to aid school personnel to identify problem behaviors, and to implement and evaluate intervention procedures to remediate or alter those problem behaviors. This manual describes the development, validation, administration, scoring procedures, and possible uses for the PPBC. The purpose of the checklist is to provide specific information to specialists and support personnel who may need to further evaluate or prescribe services to children. It is designed to identify and rate the specific problems which classroom teachers perceive to warrant professional intervention services. The checklist does not designate a specific treatment approach nor determine a specific diagnostic or placement category. Rather, it is intended to be used as a screening instrument or as a supplement in a more comprehensive evaluation process. Federal laws and most state laws require children to be evaluated by multidisciplinary teams of specialists using several types of assessment instruments before placement into special education programs. The identified problem behaviors may be used to design specific intervention programs for certified special education students or noncertified students with less severe problems. The targeted problem behaviors could be included in Individual Education Plans. (Author/PN)

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The Portland Problem Behavior Checklist

Preliminary Manual

by

Steven A. Waksman, Ph.D.

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Preliminary Manual for the Portland Problem Behavior Checklist (PPBC)

Introduction

It is estimated that between 10%-30% of all school children have psychological problems severe enough to require professional intervention services (Berlin, 1975; Cowen, Dorr, Izzo, Madonia & Trost, 1971; Miller, Hample, Barrett & Noble, 1971). However, before any intervention program can be offered, these students must be identified in such a fashion as to aid in the appropriate prescription of services. The PPBC was developed to aid school personnel to identify problem behaviors, and to implement and evaluate intervention procedures to remediate or alter those problem behaviors.

This manual describes the development, validation, administration, scoring procedures, and possible uses for the PPBC. The purpose of the checklist is to provide specific information to specialists and support personnel who may need to further evaluate or prescribe services to children. It is designed to identify and rate the specific problems which classroom teachers perceive to warrant professional intervention services. The checklist does not designate a specific treatment approach nor determine a specific diagnostic or placement category. Rather, it is intended to be used as a screening instrument or as a supplement in a more comprehensive evaluation process. Federal laws and most state laws require children to be evaluated by multidisciplinary teams of specialists using several types of assessment instruments before placement into special education programs. The identified problem behaviors may be used to design specific

intervention programs for certified special education students or non-certified students with less severe problems. The targeted problem behaviors could be included into Individual Education Plans (IEP).

Administration

The checklist should be completed by a classroom teacher or several teachers who have daily contact with the child. All items should be rated based on observations or first hand knowledge, and each item should be checked once. To allow for a system of assessment and evaluation to be built into the checklist, the teacher should use the boxes to rate the problems on a scale of 0 (no problem) to 5 (severe problem). The three spaces for "other" problems should be used to write in and rate specific problems not included in the checklist. Students in the middle and upper grades should have several of their teachers complete individual checklists. Students' behavior often varies greatly in different classes.

Items A-G on page 2 should be completed by the same teacher who completes page 3.

Scoring

To obtain a total score for purposes of comparison or for evaluating changes over time or after intervention, all 29 items should be weighted (0 to 5) and summed. The "other" categories should not be included for purposes of evaluating change since they were not included in the initial reliability studies.

Development of the Scale

During the 1976-77 school year, teachers referring students to the Multnomah County School Mental Health Program were asked to specifically state three problems they were most concerned about for each referred student. Two hundred seventy-five specific problems were submitted in all. From this large group of problem descriptions, the 29 most frequent problems were selected and included in the checklist. Since the School Mental Health Program served children from all age groups, the items represent concerns of teachers working with Head Start, elementary, middle school and high school students. Statements describing common Head Start, kindergarten or elementary school problems would be "excessive crying," "excessive fears," or "aggressive (physical)." Common middle school problems are typically "negativism," "calls out," or "distracts others." Frequent high school problems are "inattentive in class" and "interfering drug abuse."

Test-retest Reliability

Two hundred thirty-nine students from grades kindergarten through high school were included in a test-retest reliability study (Waksman & Loveland, 1980). During the first week of November, randomly selected students[1] from three elementary schools and one middle school in Portland, Oregon, and one high school in Gresham, Oregon, were rated by their teachers who were naive to the purpose of the study. The same teachers were again asked to complete the checklist for the same students one month later

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1 Elementary students were simply randomly selected from the school registration lists and their regular teachers completed the form. Middle school and high school students were included by randomly selecting one of their six to eight class teachers to complete the checklist.

during the first week of December. One hundred seventeen primary students (grades K-5), 100 middle school students (grades 6-8), and 22 high school students (grades 9-12) comprised the sample. Of these, 117 were male and 122 female.

To obtain total scores for correlating test-retest coefficients, all items were weighted (0 to 5) and summed. The "other" category on the checklist was not included. An overall test-retest reliability correlation of .81 was obtained, and individual grade coefficients ranged from .61 to .99 (see Table 1). The test-retest correlation for male students was .85 and for female students was .78. The correlations for primary, middle, and high school students were .83, .78, and .88, respectively.

In an attempt to evaluate how reliable the checklist is for identifying pinpointed problems, reliability coefficients were calculated for each of the 29 specific items using a random sample of 39 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The item reliabilities ranged from .34 to +1.00 with two undefined (McCall, 1970, p. 124) categories, and a mean item reliability coefficient of .71 (see Table 2). No attempt was made to measure agreement correlations between different raters for middle or high school students due to the commonly obtained low cross-situational correlation coefficients (Bem & Allen, 1974; Mischel, 1968).

Concurrent Validity

To determine the degree of correlation with other instruments designed to describe students' school adjustment, the Portland Problem Behavior Checklist (PPBC) ratings were compared to ratings obtained on the AML Checklist (Cowen et al., 1973) and the Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist (Walker, 1970).

Table 1

Test-Retest Reliability Correlations

Grade/Sex	N	r
K	14	.97
1	31	.85
2	24	.78
3	22	.84
4	17	.83
5	9	.99
6	28	.61
7	36	.77
8	36	.86
9-12	22	.88
Primary (K-5)	117	.83
Middle (6-8)	100	.78
High School (9-12)	22	.88
Male	117	.85
Female	122	.78
Total (K-12)	239	.81

Table 2

Test-Retest Item Reliability Correlations

(N = 39; grades K-5)

	Item	r
1)	Negative self-statements	.69
2)	Starts classwork too slowly	.54
3)	Refuses to do classwork	.65
4)	Insufficient independent classwork	.77
5)	Homework not completed	.72
6)	Not prepared for class	.34
7)	Insufficient academic achievement	.51
8)	Frequently absent	.35
9)	Frequently late	.52
10)	Acts tired or depressed	.71
11)	Excessive grooming problems	.97
12)	Interfering drug abuse	undefined
13)	Peer rejection	.94
14)	Insufficient peer interaction	.38
15)	Aggressive (physical)	.49
16)	Aggressive (verbal)	.75
17)	Destructive	.99
18)	Calls out	.81
19)	Distracts others	.82
20)	Overactive	.92
21)	Non-compliance	.76
22)	Negativism	.92
23)	Temper tantrums	.68
24)	Stealing	undefined
25)	Rejects many school rules	.86
26)	Excessive crying	.59
27)	Excessive fears	.77
28)	Excessive physical complaints	+1.00
29)	Inattentive in class	.56

The AML is a "quick-screening device" with 11 items and 3 factors designed to identify early school adjustment. The checklist requires teachers to rate students on the 11 behavior descriptions with a scale from 1 (never observed) to 5 (observed most or all of the time). Previous research has shown the AML to be a reliable instrument which correlates well with lengthier checklists and which discriminates between students with school adjustment problems and students without problems (Cowen et al., 1973). Teacher ratings were obtained on 54 students in grades kindergarten through 8th grade who were referred to the School Mental Health Program due to school problems. The degree of correlation between the AML and the PPBC ratings was .57 (Waksman & Loveland, 1980).

The Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist (WPBIC) is a 50-item, 5 factor checklist designed to identify children with "behavior problems who should be referred for further psychological evaluation, referral, and treatment." The checklist requires teachers to indicate which of the 50 behavior descriptions they have observed that particular student display during the past two month period. Previous research has demonstrated the WPBIC to have high internal consistency and to be able to discriminate those students receiving special educational or clinical services from randomly selected students not identified as needing assistance (Walker, 1970). Teacher ratings were obtained on 25 students in grades three through eight who were referred to the School Mental Health Program due to school problems. The degree of correlation between the WPBIC and the PPBC was .66 (Waksman & Loveland, 1980).

To determine the degree of correlation with an instrument designed to measure children's self-descriptions, the PPBC ratings were compared to scores obtained on the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale

(Piers & Harris, 1969). The Piers-Harris is an 80-item self report inventory which requires children to respond either "yes" or "no" to each statement. Prior research has revealed a moderate degree of reliability and validity for this inventory (Piers & Harris, 1969). Children's scores on the Piers-Harris Scale and teacher ratings on the PPBC were obtained for 30 students referred to the School Mental Health Program for school problems. The degree of correlation between the Piers-Harris Scale and the PPBC was .49 (Waksman & Loveland, 1980).

Construct Validity

Although all the previously reported analyses lend support to judgments of construct validity, an attempt was made to measure changes on the PPBC following psychological treatment. Twenty-six students from two schools in Portland, Oregon, who received at least one month of psychological services received post-treatment ratings by teachers which indicated a group improvement rate (percent reduction in scores) of 24%. Eleven additional students from a third school in Portland, Oregon, showed a group improvement rate of 27%. This compares favorably to the positive change rate of 13% obtained by the 239 randomly selected student ratings mentioned in the test-retest study (Waksman & Loveland, 1980).

Normative Information

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present norms based on 217 randomly selected public school students from Portland, Oregon, ranging in grades kindergarten through grade 8. Table 3 presents norms for both males and females while Table 4 presents norms for males only and Table 5 presents norms for females only. All the students were enrolled in regular classes at the time of the ratings

and the sample includes representatives from different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. The raw scores are presented together with percentile rankings for convenient interpretation. Due to the limited sample of students, test users are urged to develop their own local norms.

Suggested Uses

1. For school district screening program
2. To begin referral or evaluation process
3. To supplement other assessment procedures in full evaluation process
4. To identify behaviors for intervention program
5. To evaluate intervention program
6. To identify behaviors for Individual Education Plan (IEP)
7. To prepare school personnel for conference about student
8. To prepare school personnel for conference with parents
9. To provide information to community counseling or diagnostic service
10. For research and program evaluation

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Table 3

Randomly Selected Public School Students
From Grades Kindergarten Through 8
(N = 217)

PPBC Raw Score	Percentile	PPBC Raw Score	Percentile
0	24	38	94
1	30	39	94
2	38	40	94
3	46	41	94
4	47	42	94
5	52	43	94
6	54	44	95
7	54	45	95
8	58	46	95
9	59	47	95
10	60	48	95
11	64	49	95
12	65	50	96
13	65	51	96
14	67	52	96
15	70	53	97
16	74	54	97
17	77	55	97
18	78	56	98
19	80	57	98
20	81	58	98
21	81	59	98
22	82	60	98
23	83	61	98
24	84	62	98
25	85	63	98
26	85	64	98
27	86	65	98
28	86	66	98
29	87	67	98
30	89	68	98
31	89	69	98
32	89	70	98
33	90	71	99
34	91	72	99
35	91	73	
36	91	74	
37	91	75	

Table 4

Randomly Selected Public School Students
From Grades Kindergarten Through 8
(N = 108; Males Only)

PPBC Raw Score	Percentile	PPBC Raw Score	Percentile
0	14	38	90
1	17	39	90
2	24	40	90
3	27	41	91
4	30	42	91
5	38	43	91
6	40	44	92
7	40	45	92
8	44	46	92
9	45	47	92
10	47	48	93
11	50	49	93
12	50	50	94
13	50	51	94
14	51	52	95
15	56	53	96
16	60	54	97
17	65	55	97
18	66	56	98
19	67	57	98
20	68	58	98
21	68	59	98
22	70	60	98
23	72	61	98
24	74	62	98
25	76	63	98
26	76	64	98
27	76	65	98
28	77	66	98
29	79	67	99
30	81	68	99
31	82	69	99
32	83	70	99
33	85	71	
34	86	72	
35	86	73	
36	86	74	
37	87	75	

Table 5

Randomly Selected Public School Students
From Grades Kindergarten Through 8
(N = 109; Females Only)

PPBC Raw Score	Percentile	PPBC Raw Score	Percentile
0	34	38	97
1	44	39	97
2	53	40	97
3	64	41	97
4	65	42	97
5	67	43	97
6	67	44	97
7	68	45	97
8	71	46	97
9	73	47	97
10	74	48	98
11	78	49	98
12	79	50	98
13	79	51	98
14	83	52	98
15	84	53	98
16	88	54	98
17	89	55	98
18	89	56	98
19	92	57	98
20	93	58	98
21	93	59	98
22	93	60	98
23	93	61	98
24	94	62	98
25	94	63	98
26	94	64	98
27	95	65	98
28	95	66	98
29	95	67	98
30	96	68	98
31	96	69	98
32	96	70	98
33	96	71	99
34	96	72	
35	96	73	
36	96	74	
37	96	75	

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PORTLAND PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

By

Steven A. Waksman, Ph. D. and Associates

Published by

ENRICHMENT PRESS

P.O. Box 81
Portland, Oregon 97207

Student's Name _____ Today's Date _____
(first middle last)

Age _____ Date of Birth _____ Sex M ____ F ____
(month day year)

Grade _____ School _____ Class _____

Teacher's Name _____ Years of Experience _____

Rater's Name If Other Than Teacher _____ Position _____

Student's Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name _____

Student's Phone _____ Parent's/Guardian's Work Phone _____

Message or Emergency Phone _____

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PORTLAND PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

Items A - G are to be completed by the same person who completes Page 3.

A. This student's intellectual ability appears to be:

Very Low _____ Below Average _____ Average _____ Above Average _____

B. This student's teaching level in reading is _____ grade level.

C. This student's teaching level in math is _____ grade level.

D. This student's teaching level in language arts is _____ grade level.

E. This student's native language is English _____ Other _____

F. Does this student have a physical handicap? Yes _____ No _____

Explain: _____

G. What special services if any is this student receiving now?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PORTLAND PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

This rating scale should be completed by a classroom teacher who has daily contact with the student. Teacher's basis for comparison should be the average student in the regular class. **All** items should be rated based on observation or first hand knowledge and each item should be checked **once**. The purpose of this checklist is to give specific information to specialists and support personnel who may need to further evaluate or prescribe services for this student. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Problems	No Problem 0	1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	4	Severe 5
Negative self statements (self concept)						
Starts classwork too slowly						
Refuses to do classwork						
Insufficient independent classwork						
Homework not completed						
Not prepared for class (no materials)						
Insufficient academic achievement						
Frequently absent						
Frequently late						
Acts tired or depressed						
Excessive grooming problems						
Interfering drug abuse						
Peer rejection						
Insufficient peer interaction						
Aggressive (physical)						
Aggressive/Threats (verbal)						
Destructive						

Problems	No Problem 0	1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	4	Severe 5
Calls Out						
Distracts Others						
Overactive						
Non-compliance (not minding)						
Negativism (backtalking)						
Temper tantrums						
Stealing						
Rejects many school rules						
Excessive crying						
Excessive fears						
Excessive physical complaints						
Inattentive in class						
Other:						

Total Score _____

(do not include "Other")

You may use the back of this form to describe any other information you believe will be helpful.

This space may be used to describe any other specific information which you believe will be helpful.